

A Week in Washington DC

by

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Introduction

During our recent furlough God opened the way for Marilyn and I to visit Washington DC from 24 to 30 September 2015. The main reason for going there was to attend a conference which resonates with the vision and mission of the Canberra Declaration. This was the 10th Values Voter Summit from 25 to 27 September. This would be our first visit to the US capital, so we decided to spend an extra three days to take in the sights and gain fresh understanding of the prayer movement.

At the outset of this report we thank God for our team leaders, Warwick and Alison Marsh, who arranged a sponsorship for us with the organisers of the Values Voter Summit. We also thank God for the Canberra Declaration community for their prayers while we were away.

Values Voter Summit

Since 2006 the Values Voter Summit has been hosted by the Family Research Council and has been dubbed *“the premier conservative event in the county”*. Attendance has grown to several thousand.



This 10th [Values Voter Summit](#) (VVS) was co-sponsored by the American Family Association, American Values, Liberty Institute, Ohio Christian University and the Family Research Council (FRC). Referring to the grave dangers facing America, VVS convenor and FRC President, Tony Perkins, stated *“We don’t know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future. We also know our duty to build a culture in which human life is valued, families flourish, and religious liberty thrives”*. Very clearly from this last statement we can see how the VVS is relevant to the Canberra Declaration

with its three focus areas 'Religious Freedom', 'Marriage and Family' and the 'Sanctity of Human Life'.

There were more than thirty distinguished speakers from many different spheres of American society. Many of these were politicians including eight presidential candidates. There was also a colourful variety of other speakers including a panel of retired generals, a comedian, best-selling authors and a good representation of women speakers. Often speakers would quote former US President, Ronald Reagan, for setting the standard. Each year a VVS 'straw poll' for all presidential candidates is conducted. This year Republican [Senator Ted Cruz](#) of Texas won the VVS straw poll for a third time.

There were 78 booths in Exhibit Hall. It was a great place to meet like-minded American brothers and sisters and pick up relevant materials. The dominant colour scheme was red white and blue! On two evenings there were premier showings of new Christian full-length movies. Another excellent feature of the conference was the superb ticketed meals put on by the different VVS sponsors who gave dynamic presentations. This culminated on the last night with the Faith, Family and Freedom Gala Dinner.

We had hoped to make contact with the EO of the Manhattan Declaration, Eric Teetsel, but he was unable to attend this year. While we were disappointed, we thank God for a contact we made after the closing Sunday morning worship service. We found that we were sitting beside a personal friend of Robert P. George who was one of the main drafters, along with Chuck Colson, of the Manhattan Declaration. You can find his personal encouragement to us regarding the work of the Canberra Declaration in his 18 October email at the end of this report.

A Momentous Time



On our arrival at the conference venue and our accommodation, we were met by crowds of Chinese waving the red flag of the People's Republic of China. There were also many banners written in Chinese. Chinese President Xi Jinping had recently arrived and was staying in the hotel opposite ours. The President of China was here for an [elaborate state visit](#) hosted by President Obama replete with a formal White House state dinner and a 21-gun salute!

How sad that a state ruled by an atheistic Communist Party is honoured by a country whose motto is 'In God we Trust'. How disturbing that the White House is seemingly not concerned about China's horrific repression of human rights through state persecution of Christians, forced abortions and control of the media. The crowds of flag-waving Chinese remained in view throughout the entire VVS. It was as if the devil was mocking the Summit's focus on faith, family and freedom.



Also on the day of our arrival Pope Francis made history's first papal address to the US Congress.



The Pope [spoke passionately](#) about embracing immigrants and combating climate change and touched on issues such as the dangers of religious extremism and arms trading worldwide. Noticeably, he chose to only speak briefly and indirectly about abortion and the rapid embrace of same-sex marriage in the United States. He said *"the Golden Rule reminds us of our responsibility to protect and defend human life at every stage of development"* and *"fundamental relationships are being called into question, as is the very basis of marriage and family"*.

Pope Francis did however meet secretly with Mrs Kim Davis who is the Kentucky clerk who defied the Supreme Court and refused to issue marriage licenses to homosexual couples. Davis spoke and was honoured at the VVS for her courage with no mention of her visit with the Pope.



On the second day of the VVS there was jubilation over the fresh news that John Boehner, the speaker of the House of Representatives, had decided to [resign from Congress](#). This stunning development took place only a day after Boehner welcomed the Pope to Congress. It came as the result of intense pressure from conservative Republicans to defund Planned Parenthood. Senator Ted Cruz particularly had a rather contentious relationship with Boehner.

This long-standing battle intensified after the on-going release of secretly recorded videos that exposed Planned Parenthood's [harvesting and selling of body parts of aborted babies](#). The key person behind this exposure, David Daleiden, the founder of Center for Medical Progress, spoke at VVS. He described the actions of Planned Parenthood as *"unconscionable atrocities against humanity"*.

The evening of Sunday 27 October, the last day of the VVS, coincided with a rare [‘supermoon’ total eclipse](#). It was the fourth and final ‘blood moon’ of a tetrad which began on 15 April 2014. These blood moons have attracted much attention in some Christian circles as all [four blood moons](#) in the tetrad have taken place on Jewish feasts.

Some Christians have seen this as a significant sign for the last days in the light of Joel’s prophecy quoted by Peter,

“The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord” (Acts 2:20), and the words of Jesus telling about His return where He says, “There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near” (Luke 21:25-28).



Sobering Words

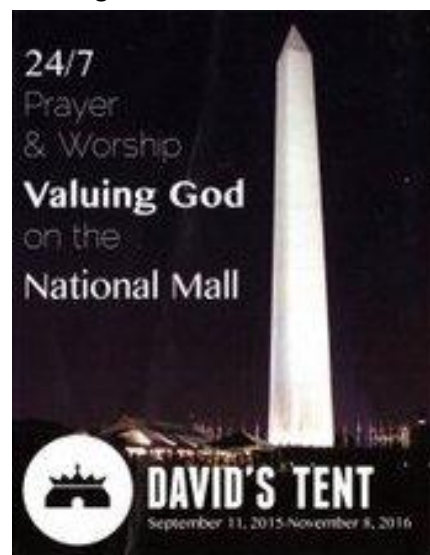
For me the most moving session of the VVS was the back-to-back presentations of best-selling authors, messianic Christian, [Rabbi Jonathan Cahn](#) and [Joel Rosenberg](#). Both Cahn and Rosenberg believe that the abortion of 58 million unborn children in America is an abomination that God cannot ignore. They painted a dire picture for America. Cahn, who wrote *‘The Harbinger’*, believes that *“America has gone away from God ... we are racing to judgement ... a great shaking is coming”*. Rosenberg, who wrote *‘Epicenter’* and *‘The Last Jihad’*, believes that *“the US is facing implosion ... darkness is falling ... judgment is coming”*. Whereas many of the VVS speakers pointed to a political solution, Cahn and Rosenberg pointed more to a spiritual one. Both declared our need for revival as our only hope. Cahn encouraged us to pray with 2 Chronicles 7:14 and finished by saying *“Jesus is the hope for America”*. Rosenberg said *“God may forestall His judgment ... we need to be lights in the darkness whether that is in the context of spiritual awakening or under tyranny”*. Clearly we live in perilous days and we need to pray.

Prayer in DC

While in Washington DC Marilyn and I had enriching exposures to different prayer ministries and styles of prayer. Highlighted below are just a few of the many prayer ministries in Washington DC.

1. **VVS Prayer Room** - During the VVS tightly-packed program, Marilyn and I were twice able to spend time in the Prayer Room. A small team of intercessors led by Pierre and Christina Bynum were in constant prayer during the entire VVS. Though there were only a dozen or so intercessors at any time, we are convinced they were the essential spark plug for the success of the VVS.
2. **Drive the City Prayer Tour** - One of the VVS intercessors was Jeff Wright, the Director of the [National Prayer Embassy](#). Their ministry is to drive the city in a marked bus for prayer tours. Marilyn and I joined in one of these prayer tours on the final morning before the closing VVS worship service. We stopped at many key sites including the US Supreme Court with the American Center for Prayer and Revival opposite using a mix of written and spontaneous prayers.

3. **Lamplighters Prayer Fellowship** - Another VVS intercessor was [Summer Ingram](#) the National Prayer Director – Congressional Prayer Caucus Foundation in Washington DC. We had developed a relationship with her through the Global Billion Souls Revival Prayer Call. She invited us to attend a prayer fellowship that meets weekly to pray for Washington DC. This was led by Jon and Jolene, seasoned intercessory missionaries and founders of Lamplighters. Their apartment on the 19th floor overlooks the Pentagon and Arlington Cemetery and other landmarks like the Capitol and the Lincoln Memorial can be easily spotted. This strategic location for them to reside, they believe was an answer to prayer and fulfilment of a prophecy.
4. **Sanctuary of Prayer** - After the VVS we stayed at the Sanctuary of Prayer run by the American Christian Trust. The lady founder was a personal chaplain to President Ronald Reagan. It operates from a stately home across the street from the Embassy of Israel. Each guest who stays is required to pray for three hours a day either at the Sanctuary or walking the halls of government or at an embassy in which the guest may be led to pray. Many influential prayer leaders have spent time in its lovely chapel as a place for daily divine appointments.
5. **Bless DC Prayer Circles** - This is a prayer walk that visits 12 suggested landmarks '[to circle them in prayer](#)'. Included in the walk are the White House, Holocaust Museum and the US Capitol. A Prayer Circles walking map and Bible Guide helps you pray. It begins at the [American Center for Prayer and Revival](#) and finishes at Ebenezer's Coffeehouse. Due to limited time we circled the Lincoln Memorial and the Martin Luther King Jr Memorial in prayer. We felt especially drawn to these after watching the movies Lincoln and Selma on our Qantas flight across the Pacific.
6. **David's Tent DC** - A passionate group of believers are looking to mobilize the Church of America to sustain 24/7/365 worship to King Jesus, in the pattern of David's Tabernacle. It is scheduled to run day and night from 11 September 2015 to 8 November 2016 in Washington D.C. [David's Tent](#) is happening within view of the White House, the U.S. Capitol, and under the shadow of the Washington Monument. This is as public as it gets! The Bible is read out loud similar to our Bible Reading Marathons of last year. During my turn I was delighted to read the very same passage – Deuteronomy 28 to 32!
7. **Washington DC Churches United Prayer** - Two weeks after the VVS, on 12 October 2015, churches from all over the Washington DC region [gathered as one on the National Mall](#) to pray, repent and ask God for a Great Awakening. In 2000, an estimated 400,000 people gathered on the National Mall to pray and fast as part of [The Call led by Lou Engle](#). In 1980, Canberra Declaration visionary, Dr Graham McLennan, helped to organise the 'Washington for Jesus Rally' which had 250,000 in attendance. This became the inspiration for the [historic 1988 National Gathering](#) in Canberra which had 50,000 in attendance.



Conclusion

We thank God for the opportunity to take part in the 10th Values Voter Summit in Washington DC which provided us with many fresh insights and challenges relevant to the Canberra Declaration. We thank the Canberra Declaration for its contribution to our accommodation expenses.

In his opening remarks Tony Perkins, the longest serving president of the Family Research Council, drew our attention to the fact that a powerful communist leader, the President of China,

was just across the street. This he felt was a poignant reminder that Americans are facing enemies to Christian values both from within the United States and without. And so Tony Perkins made the strong statement, *“Now is the time to stand boldly for the truth that sets us free and not on the sidelines ... I will give up my life before I would give up my religious freedoms”*. Later in the VVS when introducing his new book *‘No Fear – Real Stories of a Courageous New Generation Standing for Truth’*, he shared his conviction that *“few men really live because they are afraid to die ... for it was Jesus who set us an example, denying Himself and calling us to take up our cross and follow Him”*. Tony finished by praying *“that we would not shrink back in this hour as we face increasing rejection, ridicule and even violent resistance for being followers of Jesus”*.

May God use the Canberra Declaration to help shape a courageous new generation who will stand for Truth in Australia.

Recommendations

1. The Canberra Declaration maintain close links with like-minded ministries, bodies and individuals in America especially in the area of prayer.
2. The Canberra Declaration consider the possibility of an event patterned on the Values Voter Summit in Canberra for Australia.
3. The Canberra Declaration in consultation with the Canberra House of Prayer and others develop a Prayer Circles map and guidelines to cover strategic prayer locations in the ACT.

Encouragement – An Email from Robert P. George dated 18 October 2015

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Rowsome,

My friend Sarah Brown, whose brilliant daughter I had the pleasure of teaching at Princeton, kindly wrote to tell me about meeting you at the Values Voters Summit in Washington, DC. I was excited to learn about everything you are doing under the auspices of the Canberra Declaration, and I want you to know how delighted my late beloved friend Chuck Colson would be by your work.

Please know that you and your family and your labors will be in my prayers from now on. Things look bleak everywhere, but God is in charge. The victory will come on His terms and in His time. Our duty, as Chuck always reminded me, is to be faithful and bear witness.

Please let me know if ever there is anything I can do to assist you in your work. Believe me, I know how challenging it can be to stand up for what is true and good and right and just in the circumstances in which we Christians and our allies from other faiths find ourselves today!

I have visited Australia twice and enjoyed your country and countrymen immensely. I had to decline an invitation for a third visit (this one from Monash University) because of back trouble, but I do hope to be down there again someday.

May God richly bless you and continue to make you a blessing for Australia and for the Christian Church.

Yours faithfully,

Robert P. George

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